# MINUTES

OF THE

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE NINTH

# American Convention

FOR PROMOTING THE

# ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

AND

# IMPROVING THE CONDITION

OF THE

# AFRICAN RACE:

ASSEMBLED AT

# PHILADELPHIA,

ON THE NINTH DAY OF JANUARY, ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND FOUR, AND CONTINUED BY ADJOURNMENTS UNTIL THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE SAME MONTH, INCLUSIVE.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1804.

# Minutes

OF THE

## PROCEEDINGS

OF THE NINTH

## AMERICAN CONVENTION

FOR PROMOTING THE

## ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, &c.

### SELECT COUNCIL CHAMBER.

*Philadelphia, January 9th*, 1804.

THIS being the day appointed for the meeting of the American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and improving the Condition of the African Race,---a number of delegates attended, when the credentials from the different Societies were produced, and it appeared that the following persons were appointed members of this Convention, viz.

*New-York*-----John Murray, jun.
William T. Slocum,
Abraham Skelton,
William Franklin,
John Coffin,
Samuel Miller,
Matthew Franklin.

*New-Jersey*---Richard Hartshorne,
Robert Smith, jun.

Gershom Craft,
John Griscom,
Amos Cooper,
Thomas Redman,
William Newbold.

*Pennsylvania*---Thomas P. Cope,
James Todd,
James Milnor,
Othniel Alsop,
George Williams,
William Jones.

*Delaware*-----Doctor John Vaughan,
Joseph Bringhurst, jun.

Of whom were present----William Franklin, John Coffin, Matthew Franklin, Richard Hartshorne, Robert Smith, jun. John Griscom, Amos Cooper, William Newbold, Thomas P. Cope, James Todd, James Milnor, Othniel Alsop, George Williams, John Vaughan, Joseph Bringhurst, jun.

The convention then proceeded to the choice of officers, when the following persons were duly elected :

PRESIDENT----MATTHEW FRANKLIN,
SECRETARY---OTHNIEL ALSOP,
TREASURER---THOMAS P. COPE.

John Rafield was appointed door-keeper.

The following communications from the Societies of New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, were read :——

REPORT of the "New-York Society for promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and protecting such of them as have been, or may be liberated,"

*To the Convention of Delegates, from the several Abolition Societies in the United States, to be held at Philadelphia, on the 9th day of January*, 1804.

WE have received the circular address of the last Convention, and paid due attention to the matters recommended to our consideration.

Since our last report, nothing has occurred of such interest or importance as to merit being particularly stated to the Convention.

The Society have, in several instances, been successful in procuring freedom to blacks unlawfully held in slavery; and the standing committee, whose peculiar duty it is to attend to such cases, continue their exertions, with unabated zeal.

The Free School, established by the Society, remains in a flourishing state. Above one hundred children receive instruction under the teachers supported by the Society.

We have been pleased to learn the adoption of the Constitution of the Convention; and we shall not cease our endeavours to carry into effect its recommendations, and to co-operate with our sister Societies in the great work in which we are engaged, until it is crowned with complete success.

The officers of this society, at present, are,

Samuel L. Mitchell, President; James Robertson, Vice-President; Henry Post, junior, Secretary; C. M. Slocum, Assistant Secretary;

John Murray, jun. Treasurer; Matthew Franklin, Register; Adrian Hegeman, Chairman of the Standing Committee; John L. Bowne, Secretary; Matthew Franklin, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the School; Andrew Cock, Secretary; Alexander Hamilton, Peter Jay Munro, William Johnson, D. D. Tompkins, Counsellors; Robert Bowne, Chairman, and Joseph Constant, Secretary of the Committee of Correspondence.

The following persons are appointed to represent this Society in the Convention, viz.---John Murray, jun. William T. Slocum, Abraham Skelton, William Franklin, John Coffin, Samuel Miller, and Matthew Franklin.

By order of the Society,

JAMES ROBERTSON,
VICE-PRESIDENT.

ATTEST,
HENRY POST, JUN. SECRETARY,

---

*To the Convention of Delegates from the different Abolition Societies in the United States, to be held at Philadelphia, in the First Month (January)* 1804.

THE proportion of printed copies of the minutes of the last Convention, forwarded for the use of this society, have been duly received and distributed.

The interesting contents of the Convention's pertinent address to the several Abolition Societies, obtained our special regard; and, we trust, its benevolent aim will not be altogether ineffectual in

stimulating to renewed exertions to advance the desirable objects for which these Societies were instituted.

The labours of this Society, since last year, do not appear to have diminished. The Acting Committees in the several counties have been industriously engaged in the prosecution of claims for freedom, whenever cases have presented, and, in several instances, have been successful; by which means five persons who had been illegally detained in servitude have been relieved or liberated. A variety of cases of claimants for freedom is in the hands of the Acting Committees.

The suit to which we alluded in our last year's report, against certain persons concerned in the transportation of Negroes from the neighbourhood of Elizabeth Town in this state, to Georgia, finally resulted in the acquittal of those persons, under cover of that clause in our slave-law, which grants to persons removing from one state to another, the privilege of taking with them their slaves.

Sometime in the course of last Spring, one Reuben Pitcher put into Egg-Harbour in a small sloop, (of which he was owner) for the purpose of refitting. It was discovered that he had several blacks on board, and circumstances appearing which induced a belief that he was concerned in the negro trade, information was immediately transmitted to the Acting Committee of Burlington county; and, in their name, the vessel was seized and the Negroes taken into custody. The depositions of Captain Nicholas Bowker in Pitcher's employ, and of Captain Cornelius Clark, who became possessed of the secret, were taken, which being produced at the trial, the vessel was thereupon condemned. It

appeared however, that soon after the seizure was made, Pitcher, who in his character combines considerable artifice and cunning, with the utmost rascality, managed his part so as to engage several persons in his interest, by whose assistance he procured the vessel to be appraised at about 70 dollars, a sum much under her value, and obtaining surety for this amount, made his escape with the vessel. The amount of the appraisement, therefore, is all that was obtained, excepting the liberation of the Negroes. In the course of the examination it appeared, that this vessel was fitted out at Martha's Vineyard, and that the Negroes were by various stratagems taken on board at Boston ; that she was bound to the state of Georgia, where Pitcher designed to dispose of his cargo, after recruiting at various stopping places which he had in view along the coast. It likewise appeared that this was not the first instance of his participation in this vile commerce, and that it is but a link in a systematic scheme of kidnapping, carried on by different agents along the sea coast, from New-Hampshire to Georgia.

The memorial on the subject of Slavery, presented last year by this Society to our state legislature, was, at the instance of the Society, again called into view, at their late session ; in consequence, leave was given to bring in a bill, which was ordered to be printed, and lies over for consideration to the next sitting. The principal provision which it contains, limits the term of servitude for boys at twenty-five, and girls at twenty-one, of all born after a certain period. There appeared a very flattering disposition in a majority of the members, and great hopes are entertained that it will eventually be crowned with success : but even should this hope be fallacious, we are assured that good

effects will ensue from the application, as every thing which promotes investigation on this subject, must operate, in degree, to disperse the mists of prejudice, and expose the odious nature of this national evil.

The ordinary distinctions in society are often vague, and imply no just pre-eminence: rank and titles are adventitious things, and instead of designating merit or virtue, are frequently the baubles of imbecility, or the sparkling decorations of meretricious pageantry: power too, is often unjustly acquired, and no evidence of right; and although it is acknowledged there are certain nice discriminations and shades of character, which mark different tribes and nations of mankind, it has never appeared demonstrable to the eye of reason and philosophy, that a black skin is any proof of inferiority. Virtue and real worth are the only safe criterions of excellence, and before we adjudge the prize to either claimant, we must first place them in all respects upon an equal footing. But that this equality, so essential to the growth of virtue and mental excellence, becomes annihilated by the influence of personal slavery, no one acquainted with the history of man, will ever deny. It was well observed by Homer, who lived when slavery was common, and whose knowledge of the human heart, no person who understands him will ever call in question, that "When a man is made a slave, he loses from that day, the half of his virtue." Longinus affirms, "That slavery, however mild, may still be called the prison of the soul, and a public dungeon;" and Tacitus remarks, "That even wild animals lose their spirit when deprived of their freedom." Banish from the human breast, hope and the sense of honour, (and what sense of honour, or

what hope can an enslaved pagan retain !) and you banish at the same time the noblest incentives to virtue. Hence the immense importance of our endeavouring, by all rational means, to repair the devastations which slavery and its train of evils have made upon the human character in the persons of our African brethren, and perhaps nothing within our power, can so effectually forward this great work, as the promotion of schools for their benefit : we therefore not only concur in the sentiments expressed by the last and former conventions on this head, but are free to express our solicitude that they may increasingly engage the attention of Abolition Societies. The subject has been again deliberated on by this Society, and referred to a Committee for more particular investigation, who are requested to make report at next meeting.

We have appointed Richard Hartshorne, Robert Smith, Junr. Gershom Craft, John Griscom, Amos Cooper, Thomas Redman and William Newbold, to represent this Society in the Convention.

Signed in behalf, and by order of the New-Jersey Society for promoting the gradual Abolition of Slavery, Twelfth Month (December) 20th, 1803.

WILLIAM GRIFFITH, *President.*

Attest,
ROBERT SMITH, Junr. *Sec'ry.*

Officers of the Society chosen ninth month, 1803.

PRESIDENT,
WILLIAM GRIFFITH.

VICE-PRESIDENTS,
RICHARD HARTSHORNE,
GERSHOM CRAFT.

SECRETARY,
ROBERT SMITH, JUN.

TREASURER,
WILLIAM COXE, JUN.

ATTEST,
ROBERT SMITH, Junr. *Sec'ry.*

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*To the American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and improving the Condition of the African Race.*

ALTHOUGH we have but little to communicate, yet continuing desirous to aid the labours of the Convention, we have appointed Thomas P. Cope, James Todd, James Milnor, Othniel Alsop, George Williams and William Jones, to represent us in the meeting of that body to be held on the ninth instant. And although the indifference and dislike to the universal extension of the blessings of freedom, manifested by some of our fellow citizens, would tend to excite a degree of discouragement, yet we feel a hope that the day is approaching when the rights and priveleges of men, will be as fully enjoyed by our brethren of African descent, within the limits of the United States, as by any other class of society. Prospects such as these contribute to encourage to the continuance of our labours on their behalf, and of our endeavours to diffuse among them the important benefits of school education. The institutions for this purpose heretofore reported, are still maintained; and it is with particular satisfaction we notice that this subject is recommended by the last Convention, to the different branches of their constituents.

We concur with the Convention in the propriety of having a standing Committee, charged with the

selection and publication of suitable extracts, essays and fugitive pieces relative to slavery, and have therefore placed the subject under the care of our Committee of Correspondence.

With regard to the history of slavery, mentioned in your last address, we do not know of any additional papers or documents which would be useful in its compilation: should such however be met with, we shall take due care to hand them to the Committee as requested by you.

The courts held in this state not having yet decided on the cases of unlawful traffic in slaves, reported in our last communication, we are not prepared to offer any thing new on the subject, nor are we able at this time, to give any further information relative to the kidnapping of free blacks, though there is great reason to fear the detestable practice is still carried on in some places.

When we reflect on the great number of slaves in the southern parts of the United States, and consider how much their sorrows have been multiplied, we can scarcely entertain a doubt, but that every enlightened mind will unite with us in a desire for the promotion of measures, which will alleviate the rigors of bondage, and prepare the sufferers under it for emancipation. May we then brethren cheerfully continue our exertions, cherishing a fervent, though humble hope, that they will, in due time, be rendered more extensively availing, than at any period heretofore.

Signed by order and on behalf of the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c.

THOMAS PARKER, *Vice President.*

ATTEST,

JOHN BACON, *Sec'ry.*

Philadelphia, Firſt month 7th, 1804.

The following persons were chosen officers of the Society for the present year.

PRESIDENT,

DOCTOR BENJAMIN RUSH.

VICE PRESIDENTS,

ROBERT PATTERSON,
THOMAS PARKER.

SECRETARIES,

TIMOTHY PAXSON,
JOHN BACON.

TREASURER,

JOHN EVANS.

COUNSELLORS,

| | |
|---|---|
| William Lewis, | Joseph Hemphill, |
| William Rawle, | Daniel Smith, |
| John Hallowell, | George Fisher, |
| Walter Franklin, | George Vaux, |
| James Milnor, | David Irvine. |
| Joseph Hopkinson, | |

ELECTING COMMITTEE,

| | |
|---|---|
| Joseph Moore, | Joseph Price, |
| Daniel Thomas, | Thomas Rogers, |
| Thomas Harrison, | William Masters, |
| Solomon White, | William Jones, |
| Joseph Budd, | Samuel Bettle, |
| Isaac Pearson, | Samuel Smith. |

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*To the Convention of Delegates from the Abolition Societies in the United States, to be held in the city of Philadelphia, on the ninth day of January, instant----The Delaware Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, report,*

THAT fully persuaded of the advantages arising from an annual Convention of delegates from

Abolition Societies, as a point at which may centre the united experience of our fellow labourers, in the work of emancipation of the people of colour, we have appointed Dr. John Vaughan, and Joseph Bringhurst, Jun. to present this our report, and to represent us in general Convention, at the ensuing session.

Since our last report we have gained some strength, as well in addition to the members of our society, as to the more general countenance and active support of our fellow citizens. While however we rejoice that this good principle is gaining ground, we still have to lament that too many inhabitants of our state, are either unfriendly to the Abolition of Slavery, or so indifferent as to feel but small interest therein.

One of the suits depending at the time of our last report, has been brought to trial, and terminated unfavourably to the Society : the other yet remains on the docket. Another suit has been commenced.

Twelve slaves have been liberated since last report, through the agency of the society. Among many strong presumptive cases of kidnapping, and transporting of people of colour from this state, we have at length been able fully to detect one instance ; the sufferer was regained, and the offenders brought to justice : by this result the society has received a small fund, which it is hoped will be of material service in the prosecution of its object. At the last session of our legislature, a bill was presented for the abolition of slavery, and twice read ; it was then postponed for further consideration at the next session. We have a committee of three members appointed to attend the present session of the legislature, for the purpose of using their exertions for

the enacting a similar bill into a law : we have some hopes of success. Be the event what it may, we are determined to persevere in this desirable object, until right and justice shall finally prevail.

The society has not yet published the laws of this state relating to people of colour.

A committee stands appointed for the purpose of collecting such facts as may be useful in forming a history of the progress and consequences of slavery in the United States; but we have not yet received its report.

The present officers of our society are,

PRESIDENT,
ISAAC DIXON.

VICE-PRESIDENT,
ALLEN M'LANE.

SECRETARY,
ZACHARIAH JESS.

TREASURER,
EDWARD GILPIN.

ACTING COMMITTEE,
Nathan Sharpless,
Vincent Hewes,
John Test,
John Warner.

Isaac Stevenson, *Recorder.*

Signed by order of the Abolition Society of Delaware, at Wilmington this seventh day of January, 1804.

ISAAC DIXON, *President.*
ZACHARIAH JESS, *Sec'ry.*

Resolved, that the preceding communications be referred to William Franklin, John Griscom, Thomas P. Cope, and Joseph Bringhurst, jun. to con-

sider and report thereon; together with such other objects as they may deem proper to come under the notice of this Convention.

Adjourned till to-morrow evening, at 6 o'clock.

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*January* 10*th*,

Convention met, pursuant to adjournment;

PRESENT:---

MATTHEW FRANKLIN, PRESIDENT.

William Franklin,
John Coffin,
Richard Hartshorne,
Robert Smith, jun.
John Griscom,
Amos Cooper,
William Newbold,
Thomas P. Cope,
James Todd,
James Milnor,
George Williams,
William Jones,
John Vaughan,
Joseph Bringhurst, jun.
Othniel Alsop.

The Committee to whom were referred the communications from the several Societies, made report as follows:

*The Committee appointed to digest and arrange the Objects proper for the attention of the Convention---Report*,

THAT, on examining the addresses from the several Societies, they cannot but regret that from some Societies, who formerly sent respectable delegations to the Convention, no communications or representations have this year been received; and that in some of the addresses, which have been presented, there is less detailed information than is desirable.

The Committee are much gratified in discovering that the school for the tuition of the blacks in New-York, is represented to be in a flourishing condition. This subject is of sufficient importance to gain the renewed attention of the Convention; and the Committee believe it would be proper, that, in the circular address of the present year, it be recommended to such societies as have it not in their power, from the scantiness of their funds, or other circumstances, to employ regular tutors, to form private associations of their own members or other well disposed individuals, for the purpose of instructing the people of colour, in the most useful and simple branches of education; especially on the first day of the week, which there is too much reason to believe, is, by the ignorant blacks, frequently devoted to dissipation, to the very great injury of their own morals, and the well-being of society.

At the same time that the Committee fully appreciate the importance of a lettered education of the blacks, they earnestly recommend it to the Convention, to impress the societies with the necessity of carefully watching over the religious and moral instruction of that unhappy race. They should be led from those habits of idleness, profligacy, and improvidence, consequent on slavery, into paths of sobriety and industry. Perhaps it would be useful occasionally to convene them, in order to afford suitable opportunities to impress their minds, with the necessity of their acting as becomes men, escaped from bondage, and on whose correct conduct must, in some measure, depend the liberation of their brethren, and the good treatment of such as remain in slavery. The latter should be taught obedience to their masters, and to bear with pati-

ence and fortitude, the tasks allotted them, waiting with manly resignation for the coming of that day, in which liberty shall be proclaimed to the captive.

We believe also, that it would be advisable to revive the addresses of former Conventions to the blacks, with such alterations and additions as may be best adapted to the views and particular situations of the several societies.

The advantages which have resulted from the addresses of former Conventions to the societies, are so obvious and manifold, that the Committee, without further remark, recommend the adoption of it at the present time; and as some persons are impressed with a belief, that considerable benefit would be likely to accrue from the possession of permanent officers, whose qualifications and places of residence would render them at all times serviceable to the cause; it is submitted, whether it would be proper to recommend to the societies, such an alteration of the constitution, as will make any member of any of the Abolition Societies, eligible to the office of President, Treasurer, or Secretary to the Convention.

The Committee cannot refrain from expressing their gratification in witnessing the donations which have been made by some of the societies---So much good may be expected from the establishment of a permanent fund, to be at the disposal of the Convention, that other societies, or individuals, who are in a capacity to afford it, will, we trust, be encouraged to follow the laudable example.

We find, on a recurrence to the minutes, that it was referred to this Convention to determine on the propriety of an address to the legislature of

North Carolina. The Committee being unable to determine on the expediency of that measure, have concluded to bring it again into view, that the Convention may take such order on the subject as they may judge proper.

Having attentively perused the address of the Convention of 1801, to the people of the United States, and concurred in its contents, the committee believe it would be useful to republish it, with such alterations and additions as a suitable consideration of the subject may dictate. It cannot be improper to vindicate our conduct to the world, to make an open and manly declaration of our motives, and to evince a firm and unshaken attachment to the justice and humanity of our cause. It cannot be doubted that our views are mistaken, our efforts condemned, and unfounded prejudices harboured against us, by some well disposed individuals in the community, and which we are apprehensive have been increased by ill-advised and intemperate proceedings on the part of some well-meaning but over zealous members of some of the societies. We mean not by these observations to discourage the efforts of any, but while we condemn the practice of slave-holders, we should be careful not to give unnecessary trouble or offence to them, but to temper our zeal with prudence and knowledge.

With this view, we apprehend it would be seasonable and salutary to recommend to the different societies, to be cautious in the selection of their Acting Committees; to fill them with discreet men, in order that no useless umbrage may be given to our opponents, nor suits undertaken with too much precipitation, which for want of this prudent line of conduct, have sometimes ended in injury to

the prosecutors, and been attended with heavy expence.

We further suggest whether it would not advance the great end we have at heart, to make it the duty of the Acting Committee, to open and maintain a correspondence with some of the leading friends to abolition in Baltimore, Richmond, and Alexandria, to encourage them to revive the spirit and form of their associations; and if they cannot send forward delegations to the succeeding Convention, at least to inform us of their situation, in order that the Convention may, if practicable, afford them some encouragement under their difficulties. With this subject, may be combined a further authority to the said committee, to correspond with some respectable and influential friends to the blacks in the Carolinas and Georgia, for the purpose of obtaining such information from time to time, respecting the condition of slavery in those states, as may enable them to judge of the expediency of recommending the establishment of Abolition Societies among them; and if such establishment should be found practicable, to afford the members suitable information, as to the best form of organizing themselves, by transmitting them copies of the minutes of our proceedings, and of the constitutions of the other associations in Philadelphia and elsewhere.

It is also proposed to the consideration of the Convention, whether it would not be proper to recommend to the societies who have not chosen Standing Committees, charged with the publication of extracts and fugitive pieces relating to slavery, to adopt the measure; and where such Committees exist, to impress them with the necessity of an habitual attention to the subject.

The subject of kidnapping cannot be too frequently or too earnestly recommended to the vigilance and attention of the societies, until that most abominable outrage on the feelings of humanity, shall be done away from our disgraced country. The Committee notice, with painful emotions, the prevalence of this enormous evil; and that several instances of it have occurred since the meeting of the last Convention. We therefore submit, whether it would not be well to recommend to the societies to furnish accurate accounts of the several cases which may come under their notice, and to detail with precision such of them as may be attended with particular circumstances of atrocity. We believe it would be proper that these cases should be made public by the respective societies.

To devise some eligible plan for the gradual and effectual abolition of slavery, and to provide for the security and comfortable accommodation of the blacks, when emancipated, are objects of primary importance: whether the accomplishment of them can be best attained by colonization, or whether this is the proper moment for the Convention to take up the subjects, must be left to the serious consideration of the members. The Committee judged the subject of sufficient moment to recommend it to the Convention without expressing any further opinion on the occasion.

To conclude, we confidently hope that all will feel and acknowledge the absolute necessity of a constant, indefatigable, and unchangeable perseverance in the great objects of our association, persuaded that our honest endeavours, however opposed by interest and avarice, must finally prevail. We know that we have the aid and concurrent support of some of the wisest and best men of our age, not only in Europe but America.

On motion, resolved, that William Franklin, John Griscom, Thomas P. Cope, and Joseph Bringhurst, jun. be a committee to prepare and report the form of an address to the several Abolition Societies in the United States.

Resolved, That so much of the report of the Committee of Arrangement as relates to the education, and moral and religious instruction of the blacks, be referred to the Committee on the address.

Resolved, that the subject of reviving the addresses of former Conventions to the free blacks, with such alterations and additions, as may be proper, be committed to Richard Hartshorne and George Williams.

Resolved, That so much of the said report as relates to altering the constitution in such manner as to render any member of either of the Abolition Societies, eligible to the office of President, Treasurer, or Secretary to the Convention, be referred to James Milnor, William Newbold, John Coffin, and John Vaughan.

Resolved, That so much of the said report as relates to the funds of the Convention, be referred to the Committee on the circular address.

Resolved, That William Jones, Amos Cooper, and James Milnor be appointed to deliberate further on the propriety of an address to the legislature of North Carolina, and to prepare an essay, should they concur in the expediency of such a measure.

Resolved, That so much of the report as relates to the republication of the address of 1801 to the people of the United States, with such alterations

and additions as a suitable consideration of the subject may dictate, be referred to Robert Smith, jun. John Vaughan, and James Todd, with liberty, should they deem it most advisable, to prepare an entire new address.

Resolved, That that part which relates to a recommendation of caution in individuals of the several societies in their efforts on behalf of the blacks, be referred to the committee on the circular address.

So much of the report as relates to the Acting Committee hereafter to be appointed, is postponed for further deliberation at a future sitting.

Resolved, That so much of the said report as recommends to such societies as have not appointed Standing Committees to publish extracts and fugitive pieces, to give attention to the subject, be referred to the committee on the circular address.

Resolved, That so much as relates to the subject of kidnapping, be referred to the same committee.

Resolved, That so much as relates to the formation of some eligible plan for the gradual and effectual abolition of slavery, &c. be postponed for further attention.——

Adjourned till to-morrow afternoon at half past two o'clock.

*January* 11*th*,

Convention met, pursuant to adjournment;

PRESENT:---

MATTHEW FRANKLIN, PRESIDENT.

William Franklin,
John Coffin,
Richard Hartshorne,
Robert Smith, jun.
John Griscom,
Amos Cooper,
William Newbold,
Thomas P. Cope,
James Todd,
James Milnor,
George Williams,
William Jones,
John Vaughan,
Joseph Bringhurst, jun.
Othniel Alsop.

An essay of an address to the free blacks and people of colour, prepared by the committee appointed for the purpose, being produced, was read, and on motion,

Ordered to lie on the table.

The committee on the subject of amending the Constitution, submitted the following resolution, which was read and ordered to lie on the table.

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to alter the Constitution in the manner suggested by the Committee of Arrangement.

The committee to prepare an address to the people of the United States, reported progress and were continued.

The committtee on the subject of an address to the legislature of North Carolina made the following report, which was ordered to lie on the table.

The Committee to whom was referred the subject of a memorial to the Legislature of North Carolina, have had the same under consideration, and having paid such attention thereto as was in their power, beg leave to report,

THAT in their opinion it would, at this time, be inexpedient to offer an address. They believe that public opinion in that state, is exceedingly hostile to the abolition of slavery, that every attempt towards the emancipation of people of colour is regarded with an indignant and jealous eye ; that at present, the inhabitants of that state consider the preservation of their lives, and all they hold dear on earth, as depending on the continuance of slavery ; and are even riveting more firmly the fetters of oppression----That no language the Convention could use, would have the smallest tendency to promote a relaxation of that rigorous severity, which the great body of the citizens believe necessary to preserve them from insurrection and massacre. Of these facts, some of the committee have personal knowledge, and notwithstanding there are in that as well as in the other southern states, a number of humane individuals, who sincerely deprecate the cruelty of those laws which not only tolerate the traffic in human flesh, but prohibit the feeling master from manumitting his slave; yet from a consideration of the fate that respectful addresses to the legislature on this subject, have heretofore met with, as well as from other information possessed by the Committee, they believe that great difficulty would attend even the presentation of an address, and that if presented it would not be read. The committee however beg leave to recommend, that this

subject be still kept in view, and that the Committee appointed to draft an address to the people of the United States, be instructed to insert therein, a paragraph expressive of the deep regret felt by the Convention, that laws, so inconsistent with our republican forms of government, so derogatory to the character of men professing christianity, and so destructive to human happiness, should, through mistaken policy, be continued in force, to the disgrace of our common country.

On again adverting to that part of the report of the Committee of Arrangement which relates to the Acting Committee, it was

Resolved, That it be the duty of the Acting Committee, to open and maintain a correspondence with some of the leading friends to abolition, in Baltimore, Richmond, and Alexandria: to encourage them to revive the spirit and form of their associations, and if they cannot send forward delegations to the succeeding Convention, at least to inform us of their situation, in order that the Convention may, if practicable, afford them some encouragement under their difficulties: and that it be further recommended to said Committee, to correspond with some respectable and influential friends to the blacks, in the southern states, for the purpose of obtaining such information from time to time, respecting the condition of slavery in those states, as may enable them to judge of the expediency of establishing Abolition Societies among them: and if such establishment should be found practicable, the said Committee is requested to afford the members suitable information, as to the best form of organizing themselves, by forwarding them copies of the minutes of our proceedings,

and of the Constitutions of the Abolition Societies already instituted.

The following resolutions were moved and seconded, and ordered to lie on the table.

The present Convention continuing firmly impressed with the unlawfulness and injustice of slavery, and the necessity of a persevering diligence in every lawful endeavour, on the part of the friends of humanity, to eradicate the evil from our land; and believing that many persons decline an open support of the cause of abolition, from a persuasion that the object is unattainable without endangering the safety and most important interests of the southern states, a sentiment in the opinion of this Convention fallacious and unfounded, and believing further, that the formation of a plan for the gradual emancipation of blacks, for their improvement and security when made free, and for preventing any injurious effects to the community, from the measure, would be likely to prove highly useful—

Resolved, That a committee of eight members be appointed for the above purposes, and that they report the result of their deliberation to the next Convention.

Resolved, That the Acting Committee be requested to institute a correspondence with the friends of abolition in the eastern states, on the subject of slavery in general, intreating them to maintain the spirit and form of Abolition Associations among them, and, in a particular manner, to afford their best exertions in bringing to punishment, such persons as they may discover to be concerned in the unlawful traffic in human beings.

The following reports were read and ordered to be inserted on the minutes.

The Committee appointed by the last Convention to engage some literary character to compose a history of slavery in the United States, respectfully report,

THAT they have prevailed on a gentleman of extensive literature and approved talents, to engage in this important undertaking, which has been commenced, and is in a state of considerable progress: but the completion of the work will necessarily be delayed until the author can obtain more documents than are in possession of the committee, and much information which the papers of the Convention do not supply.

THOMAS P. COPE,
JAMES MILNOR.

January 11th, 1804.

The Acting Committee report,

That agreeably to the order of the Convention, they revised and examined the minutes of the last year, caused six hundred copies of the same to be printed, and transmitted them, as also the circular address of the Convention, in suitable proportions to the different societies.

The Committee further report, that no applications for pecuniary aid, have been made by any of the societies during the recess, and they have therefore made no drafts on the funds of the Convention.

No communications have been received by the Committee since their appointment.

On behalf of the Committee,

GEORGE WILLIAMS.

The Treasurer Reports,

That since the meeting of the last Convention he has received from the New-York manumission society, two hundred dollars---and from the New-Jersey society one hundred dollars---and that he holds a resolution of the Pennsylvania society, appropriating two hundred dollars to the use of the Convention.

THOMAS P. COPE, Treasurer.

The following resolution was read and adopted, viz.

Resolved, That the Acting Committee be requested to procure a suitable person to transcribe into the book of minutes, such of the proceedings of the Convention as have not been already recorded, and if necessary, to draw upon the Treasurer for the expence.

The essay of an address to the free blacks and people of colour in the United States, was taken up and some time spent in deliberation thereon, when it was, on motion, resolved, that the subject be postponed until our next sitting.——

Adjourned till to-morrow afternoon, at half past two o'clock.

*January* 12*th*,

Convention met, pursuant to adjournment;

PRESENT:---

MATTHEW FRANKLIN, PRESIDENT.

| | |
|---|---|
| William Franklin, | James Todd, |
| John Coffin, | James Milnor, |
| Richard Hartshorne, | George Williams, |
| Robert Smith, jun. | William Jones, |
| John Griscom, | John Vaughan, |
| Amos Cooper, | Joseph Bringhurst, jun. |
| William Newbold, | Othniel Alsop. |
| Thomas P. Cope, | |

Abraham Skelton, a delegate from the New-York Society, appeared, and took his seat.

The address to the free blacks and people of colour being again taken up, and considered by paragraphs, was adopted as follows:---

*To the free Blacks, and other free People of Colour, in the United States.*

THE American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery and improving the Condition of the African Race, believe it proper to address you, on subjects highly interesting to your well being.

You can have no doubt but that our views are disinterested, and we therefore think ourselves entitled to your attention, whilst we speak of matters in which you are greatly concerned.

As you are free men, we wish you to place a proper estimate on your privileges, and to act in

a manner becoming your character; that, by your worthy conduct, you may destroy the prejudices which some persons entertain against you, and relieve your friends from the censures which they incur in consequence of your errors: we beseech you, reflect seriously and endeavour to remove these reproaches; and it is our earnest and affectionate advice, that you remember your great and good Creator, who has placed you in this life, in order that you may, by acting well your part here, be qualified for everlasting happiness hereafter—Can you expect that happiness, if instead of attending places of divine worship, there to pray for his holy aid, you spend the Sabbath, as well as much of the other parts of your time, in frolicking, drinking, or other evil practices, which destroy your own comfort, give cause of offence to your neighbours, and above all greatly displease that all-seeing God, before whom you must appear to give an account for all your conduct? Let us prevail upon you to refrain from the use of spiritous liquors, which have occasioned misery to thousands—from gaming, a vice which will bring poverty upon your families, and from frolicking and amusements, which lead to idleness and expence: these habits of dissipation, can in no wise add to your comfort. Be industrious, diligent in your business, frugal in your expences, and endeavour to lay up part of your earnings against a time of need. Some of you can read, such know the advantages of it; you who cannot, strive to acquire that knowledge.—Surely this knowledge is an object of great importance, were it only for the opportunity it affords of becoming acquainted with that best of books, the Bible. The holy Scriptures of the old and new testament, contain invaluable treasures of instruction, and of comfort. It would give us much satisfaction, could we oftener see them in the hands of

those who are able to read them, and that an increasing anxiety to become possessed of their contents, and to profit by their precepts, might be more and more observable among you.

Very much depends upon the right education of your children, endeavour to have them brought up to labour, and taught to read and write; early place them apprentice with suitable masters, and whether they be tradesmen or farmers, be always particularly careful to prefer such, as by their example, will encourage them in industry and sobriety.

In all your dealings be just and honest, give no cause of offence to any, and if any dispute, either among yourselves, or with others, should unhappily arise, in which you find difficulty, apply to such persons in your neighbourhoods as you know to be your friends, and able to give you advice and assistance. Be assured you will find this practice contribute much more to your peace and interest, than the settling your differences at law.

Be careful to observe your marriage covenants, remembering that those who violate them, will fall under the displeasure of the Almighty. We wish also to impress upon your minds, the necessity of having your marriage ceremonies legally performed, and that the births and deaths in your respective families, be carefully registered. In the words of an address heretofore made, we recommend you at all times, and upon all occasions, to behave yourselves in a civil and respectful manner, by which you may prevent contention and remove many causes of complaint: we beseech you to reflect, that you may, by your good conduct, refute the objections which have been made against you as rational and moral creatures, and lessen many of the diffi-

culties which now occur in the emancipation of such of your brethren, as are yet in bondage.

In all your communications with those of your brethren who remain in slavery, we desire you unceasingly to impress them with the necessity of contentment with their situations, submission to their masters, and fidelity to their interests—that they be not merely eye-servants, but carefully perform the labours assigned them, and manage every thing intrusted to their care, with as much faithfulness as if it were their own. By this conduct they will excite in their masters, a disposition to treat them with humanity and gentleness, and to increase the number of their privileges and comforts; and contribute to the peace of their own minds.

Console them with the reflection, that unmixed happiness in a future life, will be the portion of all good men, whatever may have been their lot here below.

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The resolution relative to an amendment of the Constitution, laid on the table yesterday, was now adopted.

The report of the Committee on the subject of an address to the legislature of North Carolina, laid on the table yesterday, being again read, was concurred in.

The consideration of the resolution respecting a plan for the gradual abolition of slavery, &c. was resumed, and after considerable discussion, was adopted.

The following persons were appointed a committee to carry the said resolution into effect, viz.

Matthew Franklin, Abraham Skelton, Thomas P. Cope, James Milnor, John Griscom, William Newbold, John Vaughan, Joseph Bringhurst, jun.

The following resolution was laid on the table:

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to prepare a memorial to Congress, requesting them to take into their serious consideration, the utility and propriety of inserting, in the regulations about to be established for the government of the territory of Louisiana, a prohibition of the importation of slaves into that territory.

Adjourned till half past seven o'clock this evening.

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*January 12th,---Half past Seven o'clock, P. M.*

Convention met.

PRESENT:---

MATTHEW FRANKLIN, PRESIDENT.

| | |
|---|---|
| Abraham Skelton, | James Todd, |
| William Franklin, | James Milnor, |
| Richard Hartshorne, | George Williams, |
| Robert Smith, jun. | William Jones, |
| John Griscom, | John Vaughan, |
| Amos Cooper, | Joseph Bringhurst, jun. |
| William Newbold, | Othniel Alsop. |
| Thomas P. Cope, | |

Resolved, That Thomas P. Cope and James Milnor, be continued a committee to afford to the author who has undertaken to compose a history

of slavery in the United States, such information and assistance, towards the completion of that work, as may be in their power; and, should it be completed before the next annual meeting of the Convention, the said committee are authorized, if it meet their approbation, to cause it to be published by subscription, or otherwise; to superintend the publication, and agree upon a suitable compensation to the author.

Resolved, That John Coffin and William Franklin, of New-York---Richard Hartshorne and Robert Smith, jun. of New-Jersey---and John Vaughan and Joseph Bringhurst, jun. of Delaware, be appointed to co-operate and correspond with the preceding committee, and to furnish them with all such documents as they can obtain, and which may be useful to the author of the proposed work.

The resolution, laid on the table at last meeting, respecting an application to Congress to prohibit the importation of slaves into the territory of Louisiana, was deliberated on and adopted; and George Williams and Joseph Bringhurst jun. were appointed to draft an essay of a memorial on the subject, and produce it at next sitting.

The following circular address to the several Abolition Societies was read, considered by paragraphs, and approved.

*To the.....Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.*

WE have received, with cordial satisfaction, the addresses to this Convention from the societies in New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

This interchange of opinion and information, between the Convention and its constituents, is as the vital current of the body, flowing from part to part, and communicating genial warmth, and health, and vigour, to every portion of the system.

Our satisfaction would have been much increased, could we have acknowledged the receipt of communications and delegations from several societies which were represented in former Conventions, but from whom we have now no direct intelligence; and had some of the addresses which have been presented this year, contained more detailed information.

Impressed with a sense of the interesting nature of the subject, we cannot but call your renewed attention to the education of the blacks. The schools are represented as being, in some parts, in a flourishing condition; while in others, it is to be feared, little or nothing has been done towards their establishment and support. We recommend to such societies as have it not in their power, from the scantiness of their funds and other circumstances, to employ regular tutors, to form associations of their members, or other well disposed individuals, to instruct the people of colour in the most simple and useful branches of education; especially on the first day of the week—a day too often devoted to dissipation. It is also of importance that their religious and moral education should keep pace with their knowledge of letters, or much permanent good will not be accomplished. They should be taught to fear and venerate the Deity; to respect the laws of the country, and in all things to act as becomes men escaped from bondage, and on on whose good conduct must, in some measure, depend the liberation of their brethren, and the kind

treatment of such as remain in slavery. We believe it would be profitable occasionally to convene them, in order to afford suitable opportunities to impress their minds with these truths.

As much good may be expected to result from the establishment of a fund, to be at the disposal of the Convention, we hope the laudable example set by some of the societies, in their donations for that purpose, will be followed by wealthy individuals, and by other societies who are in a capacity to afford it.

A person of established literary reputation has been engaged to write a history of the rise, progress, and present state of slavery in the United States; and some advancement has been made in the work—As a great variety of information on this subject will be necessary, to enable the author to compose a correct and ample history, you are requested to collect and forward, without delay, all such essays and facts, relative to the design, as may be in your power.

At the same time that we invite a vigilant and constant attention, in the friends of the blacks, to prevent as far as their power extends, the infraction of the laws of the country in favour of emancipation, we confidently trust that due care will be observed to select men to the several offices of the societies, who have their zeal tempered with prudence and knowledge; for we are sensible, that for want of sound discretion on the part of some well-meaning, but over-zealous individuals, the views and conduct of the body at large, have been grossly misunderstood: the cause has suffered undeserved reproach in the minds of some of our fellow citizens, and heavy expences have been incurred

in the unfavourable termination of suits undertaken without sufficient evidence, and with too much precipitation.

Being persuaded that no favourable opportunity should be lost for impressing the public mind with the iniquity of slavery, and the varied vices and evils, which are incident to it, in all their forms and consequences, we entreat such of you as have not chosen Standing Committees, charged with the publication of extracts and fugitive pieces, on this very interesting subject, to adopt the measure: Its utility has been fully proven by experience, which is the best test of wisdom. To those societies who have derived advantage from the practice, we recommend a diligent and habitual attention to the subject.

We observe, with much sensibility and regret, that the inhuman and wicked practice of kidnapping, still prevails in our country, and that several cases of it have occurred since the meeting of the last Convention. Was there no other object to claim the ardent sympathy, and the active opposition of our associated brethren, than this alone, it would of itself be sufficiently interesting and momentous to justify an union of all our powers, and a vigorous combination of all our efforts, to resist this single enormity, this cruel and savage violation of the rights of our fellow-men. We request that you will, in your succeeding communications to the Convention, furnish accurate accounts of the several cases which may come under your notice, and that you will detail with precision, such of them as may be attended with particular circumstances of atrocity. The perpetrators should be known and exposed to public odium: Their names whenever detected, should be circulated through-

out the continent, through the medium of the public prints ; and no offender, who can be brought to punishment, should be suffered to escape the just penalty of his transgressions.

The discouragements which prevail among the friends and advocates of the African race, especially to the southward, have excited the anxious concern of the Convention. While we have nine hundred thousand slaves in our country—while we have the strongest evidence that new importations will take place—while the abominable practice of kidnapping exists to an alarming and most sorrowful extent—while we have reason to believe that hundreds of vessels sail annually from our shores to traffic in the blood of our fellow-men—and while we feel, acknowledge, and deplore, that the cause of emancipation has many strenuous, powerful, and unwearied opponents, in every quarter of the union—Can this be the time to remit our efforts ? and to abandon that standard under which, with the favour and protection of Providence, so many thousands have been rescued from the yoke of bondage, and restored to the enjoyment of their natural rights ? not so brethren—Be not disheartened—Let us rather redouble our diligence to help forward the great and good work in which we have engaged ; resting our hopes of ultimate success, on our honest and disinterested endeavours, and on the justice of our cause.

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The following persons were appointed to constitute the Acting Committee, viz. John Griscom, James Milnor, George Williams, William Jones, Joseph Bringhurst, jun.

On motion, resolved, That John Vaughan and Robert Smith, jun. be a committee to prepare and report a set of rules for the government of the Acting Committee.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning, at 10 o'clock.

---

*January* 13*th*, 1804.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment.

PRESENT :---

MATTHEW FRANKLIN, PRESIDENT.

| | |
|---|---|
| Abraham Skelton, | Thomas P. Cope, |
| William Franklin, | James Todd, |
| John Coffin, | James Milnor, |
| Richard Hartshorne, | George Williams, |
| Robert Smith, jun. | William Jones, |
| John Griscom, | John Vaughan, |
| Amos Cooper, | Joseph Bringhurst, jun. |
| William Newbold, | Othniel Alsop. |

The committee appointed to draft a memorial to congress, produced the following; which was read by paragraphs, adopted, and referred to the Acting Committee, who are desired to forward the same to the seat of government.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

THE Convention of Delegates, from the different Abolition Societies of the United States, beg leave respectfully to propose for your

consideration, the utility and propriety of passing such laws, as shall prohibit the importation of slaves into the Territory of Louisiana, lately ceded to the United States.

Your memorialists feel themselves deeply impressed with this important subject; and they deem it their duty to solicit, most earnestly, your serious attention to the proposition. They believe, that wisdom and sound policy are so intimately united, by their Eternal Parent, that man cannot separate them with impunity. If wisdom urge the performance of any particular act---if it command the formation and establishment of any specific law; the soundest policy will be evinced by obedience to that injunction.

True virtue, the offspring of wisdom, teaches man to love his fellow-man, and enjoins him to perform all that may be within the compass of his abilities, for the general happiness of his species. When national governments comply with this benevolent and sublime law, they become the providential instruments of national blessings; but when they oppose or disregard its dictates, their constituents must necessarily feel, sooner or later, all the calamities which follow such opposition or neglect.

Our ancestors have, unhappily, entailed on some of our states, the evils of slavery. Many of our fellow-citizens in those states, we believe, are mournfully sensible of the magnitude of their burthen; but they know and feel, that man may commit error with more facility than he can eradicate its consequences. Your memorialists entreat you to reflect on---to consider, with impartial attention, the dangers and difficulties before you; and beseech

you, with deep concern, to preserve the country, whose regulations depend on your wisdom, from similar calamities.

They also respectfully suggest to you, that while the Constitution of the United States declares all men equally entitled to liberty, they cannot conceive our government as acting consistently with its declarations, if it shall, in any instance, authorize man to enslave unoffending man. In compliance with that distinguishing principle of our national constitution, a former congress judged it expedient to introduce among its regulations for the government of the North-Western Territory, a provision resembling that which your memorialists now suggest to you.

There is another consideration, to which your memorialists feel themselves bound to call your attention. While the governments of Europe are shaken by civil discord, or surrounded by the incalculable cruelties and horrors of national warfare, a benificent and over-ruling Providence has been pleased to preserve for our country, the blessings of peace—to grant us new proofs of his goodness—and to place us in a condition of prosperity, unrivalled in the records of history. Does it not become the duty of a nation so crowned with the blessings of peace, and plenty, and happiness, to manifest its gratitude, to the whole world, by acts of justice and virtue? For the true honour of our country—from benevolence towards the future possessors of our newly acquired soil, your memorialists hope you will hear and grant their request. And with all the respect which is due to the representatives of a free people, they subscribe themselves cordially your friends and fellow-citizens.

The resolution instructing the Acting Committee to institute a correspondence with the friends of abolition in the eastern states, was taken up and agreed to.

The address to the people of the United States was again read; and, after some discussion, it was, on motion, agreed to be recommitted to the same committee, and produced at our next sitting.

William Newbold requested leave of absence for the remainder of the session, which was granted.

Adjourned till this evening at half past six o'clock.

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*January* 13*th*,---*Half past Six o'clock*, *P. M.*

Convention met.

PRESENT:---

MATTHEW FRANKLIN, PRESIDENT.

Abraham Skelton,
William Franklin,
John Coffin,
Richard Hartshorne,
Robert Smith, jun.
John Griscom,
Amos Cooper,
Thomas P. Cope,
James Todd,
James Milnor,
George Williams,
William Jones,
John Vaughan,
Joseph Bringhurst, jun.
Othniel Alsop.

The following rules for the government of the Acting Committee, reported by the committee appointed for the purpose, were now considered and adopted:——

## Rules for the Government of the Acting Committee.

I. IT shall be their duty, to meet as soon after the rise of the Convention as conveniently may be, to organize themselves; and they shall hold stated meetings on the first Mondays in the months of March, May, July, and December.

II. At their first meeting, they shall appoint a chairman and secretary----It shall be the duty of the Chairman, to preside at the meetings of the Committee; and any written communications from members residing at a distance, shall be addressed to him.

III. The Secretary shall keep regular minutes of their proceedings, and record them in a book, to be provided for the purpose.

IV. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman, at the request of any two members.

V. At all meetings of the committee, three members shall constitute a quorum.

VI. At the close of the term for which they are appointed, the minutes of their proceedings shall be submitted to the inspection of the Convention.

On motion, resolved, That the treasurer, with the advice and approbation of the Acting Committee, be at liberty to place at interest, from time to time, such monies as he may deem proper.

An amended form of an address to the people of the United States, being produced, was read and agreed to as follows :

TO THE

## PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE American Convention for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and improving the Condition of the African race, assembled for the purpose of deliberation upon such matters as relate to the design of their institution, believe it their duty to address you at this time: not with a view to descant upon the horrors of slavery, or its incompatibility with sound policy, with justice, with morality, and with the spirit and doctrines of christianity : for besides that the circumscribed nature of such an address necessarily precludes lengthy animadversion, these are topics, which have been so repeatedly and ably discussed, as to leave little room for additional argument or new illustration.— The feelings and the judgment have been often addressed with all the strength of reason and the powers of eloquence, and although prejudice may blind the eyes of some, and avarice close the avenues of sensibility in others, we derive consolation from the assurance, that the wise and the good, the liberal and the considerate of all classes of the community, lament the existence of slavery, and consider it as a dark stain in the annals of our country. We do not even hesitate to believe, that many who hold

slaves by demise, acknowledge the injustice of the tenure; but perplexed in the contemplation of the embarrassment in which they find themselves, they are ready to exclaim, "What shall be done with them!" We would willingly include these among the number of our friends, and entreat them to unite in the removal of an evil so justly and almost universally deplored.

A principal object of our concern, is to rouse the attention of the public to the continued---may we not say---increasing necessity of exertion. We fear many have taken up an idea, that there is less occasion now than formerly, for active zeal in promoting the cause of the oppressed African: but when it is remembered that there are about nine hundred thousand slaves in our country! that hundreds of vessels do annually sail from our shores, to traffic in the blood of our fellow men! and that the abominable practice of kidnapping is carried on to an alarming extent! surely it will not be thought a time for supineness and neglect. Ought not rather every faculty of the mind to be awakened? and in a matter wherein the reputation and prosperity of these United States are so deeply involved, is it possible that any can remain as indifferent and idle spectators?

The gross and violent outrages committed by a horde of kidnappers, call aloud for redress. We have reason to believe, there is a complete chain of them along our sea coast, from Georgia to Maine. Like the vulture, soaring in apparent indifference, while watching for his prey, these shameless men, disguised in the habiliments of gentlemen, haunt public places, and at night seize and carry off the victims of their avarice. The Convention are informed of some of their insidious manoeuvres.

They generally have vessels moored in small rivers and creeks, and after stealing the unprotected, they decoy by stratagem and allure by specious offers of gain, such free persons of colour as they find susceptible of delusion. Others residing near the sea-coast, are continually purchasing slaves in the middle states, to sell at an advanced price to their compeers in infamy. For the victims of this shocking business, they find a ready market among the southern planters. The design of this detail, must be obvious : It is to excite the vigilance of every friend to humanity and to virtue, in the detection and punishment of these monsters in the shape of men.

To complain of injusice, or petition for redress of grievances, cannot be mistaken for rebellion against the laws of our country. We lament therefore the existence of statutes in the state of North Carolina, prohibiting individuals the privilege of doing justice to the unfortunate slave, and to their own feelings, by setting him at liberty ; and we learn with the deepest regret, that the state of South Carolina has recently repealed the law prohibiting the importation of slaves from Africa into that state. Such appears to be the melancholy fact ; but we cannot restrain the involuntary question—Is this possible ? Is the measure of iniquity not yet filled ? Is there no point at which you will stop ? Or was it necessary to add this one step, to complete the climax of folly, cruelty, and desperation ? Oh legislators ! we beseech you to reflect, before you increase the evils which already surround you in gloomy and frightful perspective !

Beholding with anxiety the increase rather than diminution of slavery and its dreadful concomitants, we earnestly request the zealous co-operation of

every friend to justice and every lover of his country. It is an honourable, a virtuous and a humane cause in which we have embarked. Much good has already been effected, but much remains to be done; and, under the divine blessing, may we not confidently hope, that in proportion to the sincerity of our motives, and the temperate, firm, and persevering constancy of our exertions, will be our success, and peaceful reward. Those who live contiguous to the sea-ports, in particular, we wish may be stimulated to vigilance, that none of those shameful acts of atrocity adverted to, may elude deserved punishment; and our fellow citizens of the eastern states are respectfully invited to pay attention to the clandestine traffic in slaves, carried on from some of their ports. Such daring infractions of the laws of our country require prompt and decisive measures.

Many aspersions have been cast upon the advocates of the freedom of the Blacks, by malicious or interested men; but, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, and the disinterestedness of our endeavours, we hope not to be intimidated by censure from performing the part assigned us. We frankly own, that it is our wish to promote a general emancipation; and, in doing this, it is our belief we essentially promote the true interests of the state: Although many inconveniencies may result from a general liberation of the People of Colour; yet those which flow from their continuance in slavery, must be infinitely greater, and are every day increasing. It is, therefore, in our estimation, desirable that this object should be brought about with as much speed as a prudent regard to existing circumstances, and the safety of the country, will admit: But in all our endeavours for its accomplishment, we hope to move with care and circum-

spection. We pointedly disavow the most distant intention to contravene any existing law of the states collectively or separately---We will not knowingly infringe upon the nominal rights of property, although those rights may only be traced to our statute-books; and while we desire to be supported in our endeavours to defend the cause of the oppressed, we hope that discretion and moderation will characterize all our proceedings. We feel with others the common frailties of humanity, and, therefore cannot expect an exemption from error. The best intentions are sometimes inadvertently led astray; a lively zeal in a good cause may occasionally overleap the bounds of discretion: although therefore individuals may, in some instances, have suffered their zeal to exceed knowledge, yet we repeat, that the line of conduct which we approve, and which is consonant with the spirit and design of our institutions, is in strict conformity with a due submission to existing laws, and to the legal claims of our fellow citizens. On this ground we think we have a juft claim to the countenance and support of all liberal minds---of all who delight in the real prosperity of their country, and in the multiplication of human happiness.

We conclude in the expression of a hope, that the Supreme Disposer of events, will prosper our labours in this work of justice, and hasten the day, when liberty shall be proclaimed to the captive, and this land of boasted freedom and independence, be relieved from the opprobrium which the sufferings of the oppressed African now cast upon it.

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Resolved, That the Acting Committee procure the insertion of the preceding address in as many

of the public newspapers as possible; and that they also cause one thousand copies thereof, together with one thousand copies of the address to the free blacks to be printed in sheets, and transmitted to the different societies for distribution.

Resolved, That the said committee cause five hundred copies of the proceedings of this convention, and as many copies of the circular address as they may judge necessary to be printed and transmitted as above.

Resolved, That the Acting Committee present the thanks of the Convention to the President of the select council of the city of Philadelphia, for the use of this chamber during the present session.

Adjourned sine die.

Published by order of the Convention,

OTHNIEL ALSOP, SEC'RY.

THE END.

Solomon W. Conrad—Printer.